



World Vegetable Center

Communication and Information Department

2022 Summer Internship Report (July 4th – August 31st)

Topic: “Promoting the needs and interests of
Agriculture through effective communication”

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	3
Report summary.....	4
Background.....	5-6
Internship program components.....	7-12
Lessons Learned.....	12
Conclusion.....	12-13
References.....	13

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Report Summary

Agriculture is an industry of huge importance for it has a large effect on people's consumption, the environment, and nations' finance. It covers things like food, shelter, and clothing that are essential for human survival. However, there are growing pressures from climate change, biodiversity loss, and soil erosion, as well as changing consumer tastes in food and concerns about how it is produced. Additionally, the plants, pests, and diseases of the natural environment that agriculture depends on continue to provide difficulties. Many governments, non-profit, and private institutions are involved directly or indirectly to improve the agricultural system. Nonetheless, without effective communication to help people know and understand agriculture's needs in a simple language combined with visuals, to get their support, the situation will not improve. Communication plays a vital role in all aspects of our lives because it helps us in our personal, social, and professional areas. Also, it is at the core of any organization's operations to ensure its success through internal and external communication. For example, World Vegetable Center (WorldVeg), an agricultural science leader, uses pre-launch promotional material for donors and potential partners around an upcoming initiative called CITY-VEG Innovation Alliance which will help boost safe and sustainable vegetable production and consumption in urban areas. The purpose of this report is to describe how in an internship program WorldVeg uses targeted and strategic communications to raise awareness and deepen understanding of critical agricultural issues around the CITY-VEG initiative to get support from donors and potential partners, along with how the Little Free Library, a book-sharing initiative, enhances its internal communication.

1. Background

Throughout history, communication has been the core activity of human association in general, and development in particular. It is a vital part of personal life in society and it is equally important in the public and private sectors, education, civilization, administration, agriculture, and many other situations. Moreover, it creates a common pool of ideas, strengthens the feeling of togetherness through the exchange of messages, and translates through into action.

Coursera (2022) defines effective communication as the process of exchanging ideas, thoughts, opinions, knowledge, and data in such a way that the message is received and understood with clarity and purpose. Nowadays, people use many ways to communicate a message to build understanding with their targeted audience such as verbal and non-verbal, multimedia production, written, internet (on forums, social media, and websites), email, over the phone (through apps, calls, and video), etc. Thus, effective communication is essential to help satisfy the needs of people and every sector ensure the good functionality of any organization, change the attitude and behavior of people, increase people's engagement to take positive action, and so on.

Agriculture is one of the largest and oldest economic sectors in the world and a large number of people are involved in agriculture than in all the other occupations combined. It is the main sector of the economy in most countries, especially in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa. According to Blankespoor (2022), 60 percent of the world's population depends on agriculture for their livelihood. There are several reasons why agriculture can be important to developing countries; in countries with poor food security, it can be a vital source of nutrition; it provides income for farm workers and farmers and thus revenues for rural areas; it creates job opportunities in related fields, such as processing, and it generates foreign exchange for governments in some cases (OECD, (n.d.).

However, our excessive use of chemicals, waste products, soil erosion, salinity, and the depletion of fresh water are among the factors that threaten agriculture's sustainability, especially in urban centers. In consequence, this poses critical agricultural issues regarding food security, food safety, livelihood, biodiversity conservation, etc., that adversely affect farmers, consumers, and the environment. To solve these problems and lead the agriculture sector to success, several governments, the private sector, and non-profit institutions including the World Vegetable

Center are directly and indirectly involved. Nevertheless, if there is no effective and efficient communication to convey agricultural science to people, raise awareness and deepen understanding of these crucial issues, and also implement new ideas that change the mode of farming, the situation will not improve. Therefore, by using effective communication, people will be more inclined to take positive action enabling innovation, agricultural research, and development, sustainable farming practices, knowledge sharing, food security, etc.

World Vegetable Center (WorldVeg) is a leading agricultural research and development organization that develops effective external and internal communication efforts for sharing agriculture's needs and interests, ensuring it achieves its overall science agenda, engages effectively with key stakeholders, as well as strengthens staff collaboration within the organization. Among the external communication activities, CITY-VEG Innovation Alliance is an upcoming WorldVeg initiative to help solve the issues (supply and demand side constraints, inadequate policies) facing urban centers regarding vegetable production and consumption in low and middle-income countries (Asia, Africa, and Latin America). As part of the internal communication activities, the Little Free Library is a book-sharing initiative for supporting knowledge sharing.

The purpose of this report is to describe how in an internship program WorldVeg uses targeted and strategic communications to raise awareness and deepen understanding of critical agricultural issues around the CITY-VEG initiative, along with how the Little Free Library, a book-sharing initiative, enhances its internal communication.

2. WorldVeg at a glance

Established in 1971 as the Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center (AVRDC), the World Vegetable Center, as it is now known, is a renowned international nonprofit organization that conducts vegetable research and development. Its mission includes alleviating malnutrition and poverty, educating adults and children about healthy eating, and promoting sustainable vegetable production practices.

As a global agricultural science leader in promoting vegetables for development, WorldVeg benefits the academic community, decision-makers, scientists, civil society, and actors across the food system by making its knowledge, innovations, and research findings openly accessible.

WorldVeg works with partners in Asia, Africa, and Latin America on research and development projects to increase the production and consumption of healthy, safe, and nutritious vegetables. As a result, the impact on people's nutrition, income, and well-being will be faster, greater, and longer.

3. Internship program components

3.1.External communication: CITY-VEG Innovation Alliance (description)

The issues of malnutrition continue to be a major concern, particularly in countries with low and middle incomes. In every one of the world's 193 countries, there are approximately 3 billion people who have low-quality diets, and over the next 20 years, multiple forms of malnutrition will pose increasingly serious threats (Haddad et al., 2016). The persistent scourge of malnutrition in urban and peri-urban settings, coupled with the level of vegetable consumption below the recommended amounts (400 grams per day), is a tremendous problem in most countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. According to World Bank (2020), urbanization has reached over 50% of the world's population and it is estimated to increase by 1.5 times to 6 billion by 2045. Hence, population growth combined with climate change will place increasing pressure on urban food systems.

Today, people consume more meat and ultra-processed food than nutritious food: fruits and vegetables. In addition, food safety concerns, taste preferences, and cultural considerations often make vegetables undesirable as a food choice. Urban and peri-urban vegetable production suffers from microbial contamination and pesticide overuse, which poses substantial safety issues to farmers, consumers, and the environment. Unfortunately, policies geared toward promoting safe urban and peri-urban vegetable production and consumption are virtually nonexistent. Thus, there is a need to effectively communicate and simultaneously address vegetable supply, demand, and policy issues in urban centers in low and middle-income countries.

The CITY-VEG Innovation Alliance is an upcoming WorldVeg initiative that will stimulate local innovation in urban vegetable supply, demand and policy, and facilitate global knowledge sharing to boost safe vegetable production and consumption in low-and middle-income countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. The purposes of this initiative include: Promoting safe and circular urban and peri-urban vegetable systems; providing urban dwellers with vegetables-

enriched diets; Encouraging transformative urban vegetable policies and actions related to urban vegetables; creating maximum opportunities for job and income generation; reducing environmental footprints. Thus, fruits and vegetables will become more available, accessible, and desirable in low and middle-income countries. Other expected results include: vastly improved enabling environments for local and safe vegetable production and consumption; enhanced local capacity to innovate and achieve positive diet, livelihood, and environmental outcomes at scale.

3.1.1. Outputs

We conducted pre-launch promotion for CITY-VEG to inform potential donors and partners of this initiative's importance as a solution for urban agriculture systems in countries with low and middle incomes. Therefore, by encouraging potential partners and donors to support and take positive actions, WorldVeg will be able to implement this initiative successfully and reach its goals to the fullest extent.

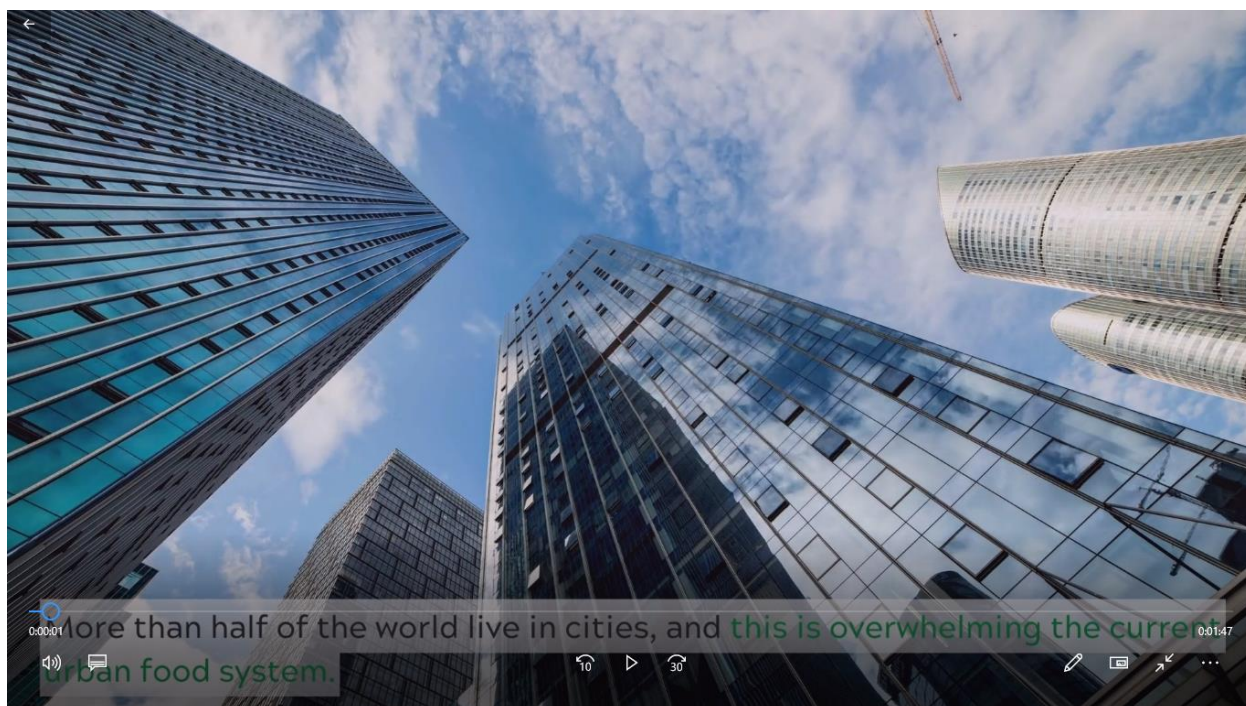
Preparatory work for CITY-VEG Innovation Alliance was done through multimedia production. As part of the work, a presentation deck for CITY-VEG was developed which explains the idea behind the initiative, its operating model, and the expected results for potential donors and partners. Pre-launch promotional materials for CITY-VEG such as social media cards/infographics and short videos were also prepared. (*See the outputs below*)



Presentation deck for potential partners and donors (some of the slides).



Pre-launch promotional material _CITY-VEG, social media cards/infographics.



Pre-launch promotional material _CITY-VEG, video. (video link : comms team)

3.1.2. Tool used

We used canva to create all of these outputs. Canva is an effective tool used for graphic designs, PowerPoints, videos, posters, social media cards, and many more.

3.2.Internal Communication: Little Free Library (description)

The Little Free Library is a book-sharing initiative implemented on August 19th, 2022 at the library by the World Vegetable Center library to expand knowledge exchange across the center. This initiative serves as a complementary resource to WorldVeg's reader community while encouraging the enjoyment of books and reading. This book-sharing initiative aims to: complement the scientific books and publication selection that are currently available in the library; create a unique communications channel for WorldVeg staff to connect, chat and share their thoughts on the books they read; Encourage the discovery of new knowledge and insights from books that were recommended by colleagues. As a result, they will perform better, and become stronger as professionals.

3.2.1. Outputs

To implement the Little Free Library, we planned to find bookshelves, decorate, organize a book donation week, and hold an opening ceremony. As a result, we wrote a concept note, designed a card, and made a poster to promote the book-sharing initiative and increase the staff's engagement. *(See the outputs below)*



Outputs for the Little Free Library implementation.



Pictures of the Little Free Library opening ceremony (2022/08/19).

3.2.2. Tool used

We used the same tool which is canva to write the concept note, design the card, and the poster.

4. Lesson Learned

4.1.Communication as a critical tool for promoting agriculture

Often, WorldVeg scientific jargon may be hard for people (in this case, donors) to understand and to get people's support or buy-in in the upcoming CITY-VEG initiative. Thus, the transfer of agricultural science to people needs to be demonstrated in simple language combined with visual elements that will be easily understood and appreciated by people such as donors and potential partners. As a result of the support gained from donors because of our multimedia production, local innovation, agricultural research and development, safe and sustainable farming practices, knowledge sharing, etc., will take place in urban areas to improve health and more resilient livelihoods. Hence, communication is a vital aspect to make a positive impact on people by promoting agriculture.

4.2. Knowledge sharing through reading

Nowadays, reading is underrated and there is so much to learn about, which is the reason why we expand our reading lists and complement our scientific journals with the Little Free Library. Knowledge sharing is very important to enhance the collaboration between the staff and help build collective knowledge which are the keys that lead to more innovation, efficient processes, increased productivity and success, and improved communication within the organization. Also, connecting with people and learning from each other in a working environment is good for building understanding and solving problems.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the importance of effective communications is undeniable in promoting the needs and interests of agriculture to gain the support of the potential partners and donors, public and private sectors, and farming communities for positive action to improve food security, diets, livelihoods, biodiversity conservation, and so on. Furthermore, both parties (sender and receiver) are satisfied when communication is understandable, clear, accurate, complete, correct, concise, and purposeful.

Communication and knowledge sharing are not only useful in an organization and the agricultural sector but all aspects of life. When it is done effectively, it ensures long-term success in people's personal, social, and professional areas.

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